

JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

REPORT ON CONFERENCE

Expedition/Project/Conference Title:

European Science Foundation (ESF) funded conference entitled 'At the Defence Frontier – The Biology of Innate Immunity'

Travel Dates: April 2007

Location: Innsbruck, Austria

Group Member(s): Jennifer Carpenter

Aims: To travel to the European Science Foundation (ESF) funded conference entitled 'At the Defence Frontier – The Biology of Innate Immunity', which took place near Innsbruck, Austria during April 22 – April 27, 2007. These meetings comprise the largest gathering of immunologists and evolutionary biologists in my field and provide an excellent opportunity for me to discuss my research with colleagues. I presented a poster titled: Recent spread of a vertically transmitted virus through populations of *Drosophila melanogaster*. I also wrote a report on the conference that was accepted as a paper in *Developmental and Comparative Immunology*.

OUTCOME (not less than 300 words):-

With financial support from the James Rennie Bequest I was able to attend the ESF funding workshop in Austria. The Workshop was attended by 90 immunologists and evolutionary ecologists—focused on the molecular mechanisms of innate immune defence and specificity of responses, the evolution of innate immunity, and ecological immunology. Many of the talks discussed the tremendous diversity in invertebrate immunity, not only in the immune systems of model organisms, such as *Drosophila* and *Anopheles*, but also in other invertebrate taxa (bed bugs, moths, crustaceans, worms, sponges and bees, among others). This provided an opportunity to interact with people working on a very wide range of systems and share ideas about how animals fight disease. The meeting gave me an opportunity to present my ideas and generate interest that may lead to future collaborations. I presented a poster titled: Recent spread of a vertically transmitted virus through populations of *Drosophila melanogaster*. In addition to this, I wrote a report for *Developmental and Comparative Immunology*, which was accepted and is *In Press*.

In addition to these helpful contacts, my attendance of the conference, allowed me to:

1. Gain experience in presenting my ideas both formally during the presentation and informally in the discussion that followed my talk with fellow scientists over coffee.
2. I wrote the press release about the conference for the European Science Foundation and they have since asked me to write other press releases. This was a great opportunity to gain science-writing experience and has led to me writing other articles for the BBC wildlife magazine, New Scientist and Genetics Society Magazine.